Graphics for Premiums—What You Need to Know

Getting premiums printed can be difficult when you have little or no graphic experience, especially if you run into technical problems. Mistakes can cost you money or cause you to miss an important deadline. Here are a few things you can do to avoid those mistakes.

Using Camera-Ready Artwork

When planning to order promotional items (posters, cups, t-shirts , funnels etc.) the first thing you should do is send your vendor a copy of the camera-ready artwork you will be using to make sure it is appropriate for your project needs. Some camera-ready artwork is too complex—blends, shading, thin lines, too many colors—and may need to be modified so it can be printed correctly on premiums such as coffee mugs, funnels, or shirts. The company that supplied the camera-ready artwork may have variations of the logo or graphic for situations like this. You can also have the vendor printing your promo make the modifications for a fee.

Using Artwork Supplied to You on Disk

You may have received artwork on a disk to reproduce a poster or promo item. Here is a list of things you should find out about the disk before you use it.

- What format is the disk? IBM or Macintosh?
- What type of disk? Zip100, Jaz 1MB, SyQuest etc.
- What fonts are being used in the art?
- Are all the fonts on the disk?
- What software programs and versions were used?
- What colors are being used? Four-color process, spot colors or both.
- What is the actual size of poster or promo item? 8.5 x 11, 11 x 17, etc.

Using E-Mailed Logos and Graphics

Hey! I'll just e-mail you my logo. Great Idea? NOT!

You've received a logo via e-mail and now want to use it in a poster or on a premium. The chances are slim that an e-mailed logo was sent in the correct format, resolution, and size. Request that the logo be sent in one of these formats: TIFF, EPS, PDF, or even a PICT file, and at least 150dpi (A TIFF file saved at 300 dpi is preferred for best quality). When possible, request that the logo be sent close to the finished size you need. Avoid enlarging the logo or graphic in your layout program. This can result in jagged edges and distortion.

A common problem is that people send Internet graphics. These are low-resolution files—usually 72dpi—and generally don't reproduce well. Opening a GIF file and translating it to one of the preferred files will not work because you will never be able to get high resolution from low resolution.

Quick Glossary

Halftone: *the reproduction of continuous-tone artwork, such as photograph, through a contact screen, which converts the image into dots of various sizes.*

Resolution: *the quantification of printout quality using the number of dots/pixels per inch.*

Dots per Inch (dpi): *the number of dots per inch that an imagesetter or laser printer produces.*

PMS Color: *a color specified in the Pantone Matching System.® This system provides a standard for describing printed colors using specific inks.*

Process Color or Full Color: *the four-color process of color reproduction, based on cyan, magenta, yellow, and black.*